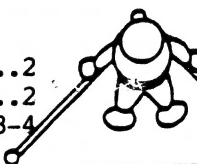


INSIDE 'MATWATCH'.....

Georgia Commission Vetoed.....2
Pinfall Profile.....2
TV TEMPO/TUBE TALK.....3-4

Comings & Goings.....5
I REMEMBER.....6
Special Note to Subscribers.....6



MAY 1-7, 1989

MATWATCH

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VOL. 1, NO. 45

Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR...

If you're successful at your job, how often have you pondered, "If something happened to me, what would the company do?," particularly a place with a weak backup training program.

I've been giving consideration to that same question in perhaps the key element for any wrestling promotion's television effort: the announcers. Oh, sure, the WEF and NWA can pluck almost at will from the smaller companies, such as Titan's theft of Tony Schiavone and the Turner's raiding of Lance Russell this past winter. But even those two organizations now find themselves in a spot where the aisles are narrowing of available voices for the nineties. If something happened to Jim Ross's voice today, some short-term measures would prevail...but where is the bench strength---the young personalities of wrestling's future? As the man who I consider the greatest of all-time, Ed Capral, told me last year: "I got out of it when I turned 50 because I woke up one morning and realized it's a young man's business."

Of the remaining independents, Charlie Platt (CNF), Lee Marshall (AWA) and Rick Stewart (ex-ACW) are the most respected among those with youth on their sides. Platt has had to endure a horrible winter of shows but is rebounding nicely with the creativity produced by new booker Bill Dundee. In fact, Charlie may have made the best call I've ever heard him make during the six-man tag with Kerry Von Erich two weeks ago.

Marshall's critics feel he may be too "Hollywood-cool" for many promotions but he does possess a golden throat and is really on when he has a humorous sidekick, a la Johnny Valiant. His current work is often dragged down by the boring color commentary of Ray Stevens.

Stewart, one of the most underrated young mike men in the business, is thought by some major promotion executives to be too casual with his open-shirted dress. But Rick owns a strong command of the mike, knows the technical side of wrestling and gives one the impression he truly cares about the matches. His recent replacement, Bill Connell, is a veteran of the Motor Racing Network and is getting high marks for his early work.

In the other groups, Dave Brown (CWA) is primarily a news personality in the Memphis market and isn't headed anywhere. I know Marc Lourance (WCCW) has his fans but his work is not well-regarded in the industry outside of Texas. And I don't even have to write a paragraph

on the travails of Ben Masters & Alan Starr in Southern---two guys who announce as if they were in the slow group in their second grade reading circle.

Gordon Solie appears destined to finish his storied ringside career with what's left of Dusty Rhodes' PMF. Since Gordon didn't hook on with TBS in January, I'm convinced his starring days are over. Don Koss of Portland may be the most improved announcer in America with Don Owen's new format but he's hardly youthful and is only seen in one U.S. city.

With the dearth of available voices, I wonder from where the talent of the '90s will rise. I advocate the idea Titan followed a couple of years back by advertising in BROADCASTING magazine for potential announcers. That cattle call produced Craig DeGeorge and while he only lasted a year with McMahonnaise, he was an upbeat, fresh face, in my view.

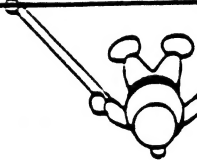
Another possibility is for a promotion to collect tapes of the sportscasters in as many of the second 100 markets as possible. These are the guys who struggle to make between \$15,000-30,000 a year, are usually early in their careers---and surely a jewel exists among them. A class candidate right in my own area is Bruce Snyder of WVM in Columbus GA, a huge wrestling fan, knowledgeable about angles and an enthusiastic personality. You may know of one similarly in your town.

Finally, a recruiting trip to some key college campuses with good broadcasting programs could produce the next major ring voice. Yes, a new graduate would have to be trained and would need to be a wrestling fan to succeed. But the big two promotions, both of whom need to build bench strength, could probably pay a fresh alumnus higher than his potential salary in a television or radio station and, even if he didn't go on the air for a full year, he could benefit from a first-class training program, learning from observing and being critiqued by a Ross, a Ventura, a Russell, or a Schiavone. Both the promotion and the trainee would be mutually investing in their futures.

After all, Steve Allen, Dennis James and Bill Cullen all called wrestling as youngsters. That first pinfall could well be a leap into the entertainment trivia books.

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to Steve Beverly at above address.



THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

GEORGIA COMMISSION BILL VETOED BY GOVERNOR

ATLANTA - In a surprise move, Gov. Joe Frank Harris (D-6a.) has vetoed a bill creating a state wrestling commission.

The proposal, passed by the Georgia House and Senate in February, had the strong backing of State Rep. Dick Lane, who has been an advocate of regulation of the wrestling industry since hearings on promotional practices were held before the legislature in 1985.

The bill, which would have become law if Harris had taken no action, would have required licensing of announcers, ring attendants and promotional officials, as well as wrestlers, in Georgia and taxed gross revenues, along with receipts from pay-cable television wrestling shows in the state.

One key insider told MATWATCH, "The commission almost passed this time because it was sneaked through, tied to another bill. If it's attempted next year, we'll be ready for it."

FUTURE CLASH DATES SET FOR TBS IN SEPTEMBER, NOVEMBER

ATLANTA - Turner Broadcasting has penciled in broadcast dates for the final two CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS specials in 1989.

CLASH VIII is scheduled Sept. 12, a Tuesday, and will serve as a preliminary to Turner Home Entertainment's pay-per-view October show.

CLASH IX will air Wednesday, November 15, and likely will act as a buildup for the December STARRCADE. TBS program exec Jeff Carr says no consideration has been given to moving the November CLASH to Thanksgiving night. Carr told MATWATCH: "Thanksgiving is one of the four least-viewed nights of the year and it would be too much of a waste."

The next CLASH special is June 14, live from Atlanta's CENTER STAGE at 8:05 p.m. (EDT).

PINFALL PROFILE

STEAMBOAT: NOT THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

By the time many of you read this, I'll be hitting the trail with MATWATCHer Dick Bourne to Nashville and finally having my long-awaited summit with some of the best readers in the world, including some of the many fine bulletin writers across the country.

I'll preface this by honestly acknowledging I know not, nor do I wish to know, a single finish for WRESTLEWAR '89---nor would I reveal it if I do. But I'd lean

heavily toward seeing a sixth Ric Flair NWA title reign begin, a return of the Road Warriors in quick order to the world tag belts and I would not be surprised to see Terry Gordy become involved in the Lex Luger-Michael Hayes U.S. title bout. So much for predictions.

But now that the big belt is on my mind, this may be a cry in the wilderness but I'd like to salute Ricky Steamboat for the intensity and excellence he has brought to the current series with Flair. Both men knew these matches could not just be good. They had to be great. They have wrestled virtually every kind of match and never failed to amaze the moderate number of fans who have viewed perhaps the best wrestling series since Jack Brisco vs. Dory Funk Jr. in the 1970s.

The unfortunate part for Steamboat is, if the reign ends in Music City, he will not go down as anywhere close to the most popular champion ever. I've tried to analyze why from a sociological perspective in recent weeks, remembering that Steamboat drew his share of boos even against the heavy heel of Randy Savage in 1986.

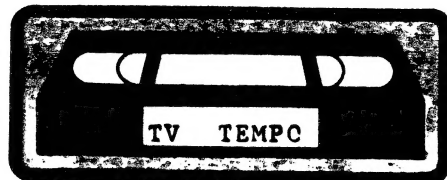
Is it that Steamboat is not a likeable person. Of course not. He's been one of the most cordial and personable performers during his NWA reign. Is it that the family unit angle has failed? Partly so. Enough contemporary fans I have talked with want to see an NWA world champion be a killer, be he heel or favorite. Even Joe Pedicino's commentary last weekend called on Ricky to leave the wife and child at home "and stand up and show you're a man." Personally, as a family man, I am anything but offended by the image and that alone has not been enough to stifle Steamboat from getting over.

There is a simple reason: Steamboat beat Ric Flair. Ricky ran into the unfortunate predicament of defeating the most popular villain in the history of this profession and the sizeable number of Flair fans simply do not want to see anyone else with the NWA belt.

The syndrome is quite similar to two 1960s-era sports phenomena. When Roger Maris hit his record 61 home runs in 1961, he was booed in virtually every major league park and even threatened. Why? He was wiping out a mark sacred to Babe Ruth---and it was the record mythically left for Mickey Mantle to break. Fans felt Maris literally stole Mantle's property right. In the mid-1960s, no professional golfer in history was hated more than Jack Nicklaus. For no other reason than he began consistently defeating the most charismatic linkswoman ever in the game, Arnold Palmer. Once, in the 1967 Masters, a fan even yelled, "Top that, Fat Jack," as the Golden Bear prepared a bunker shot.

I have publicly stated, I know of perhaps no more than four or five American wrestlers capable of the quality of performance against Ric Flair as Steamboat. But just as scores of fans continued to recognize Muhammad Ali as the heavyweight boxing champion after his loss to Joe Frazier, Flair remains The Man to legions of NWA fans.

(Continued on Page 6)



SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB
- Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Shane Douglas d. George South; Bob Orton d. Mike Justice; Sting d. Lee Scott; Michael Hayes d. Dwayne Bruce; Ric Flair d. Randy Rose; From Oni: Samoan Swat Team d. Midnight Express. PEDICINO'S NOSE (both shows): Joe calls on Ricky Steamboat to leave his wife & kids at home. DRAW. [W. WIDE]: Muta d. Bob Emory; Simmons d. South; Iron Sheik/Rip Morgan d. Ranger Ross/Steve Casey; Butch Reed d. Trent Knight; Road Warriors/First Family d. Varsity Club/Orton when Teddy Long DQs faces & Tommy Young reverses; Ric Flair/Michael Hayes d. Lex Luger/Ricky Steamboat when Hayes uses Knuckles on Luger. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [NME]: RECAPS: Luger vs. Hayes double countout; CLASH VI, Steamboat d. Flair; Varsity Club d. Road Warriors on Teddy Long's quick count. Paul E. says Bonnie Steamboat will leave Ricky if he loses May 7. DRAW-PLUS.

[MCM]: Gilbert/Steiner vs. Williams/Rotundo ends in wild brawl when Kevin Sullivan tries to cut Gilbert's hair. As Missy Hyatt climbs on Sullivan's back, he throws her down and yanks a handful of her hair and prepares to cut when the Road Warriors show up to make the save and Jim Ross goes nuts; Ron Simmons d. JYD when Teddy Long quick counts but Jim Herd fires Teddy as a ref; Bob Orton, SST, Great Muta win squashes. ANGLES: 1) Gary Hart is told he has a phone call. As he goes to the tunnel, he is creamed with a bullrope by Dick Murdoch. Orton comes with a chair and Murdoch knocks a hole in the chair with the rope; 2) In Persian Club Challenge, Sting keeps telling Iron Sheik he needs more instruction. After the third try with an obviously weary Sheik, Sting says the Sheik's obviously the best in the world, so why bother with a challenge, leaving an angry Sheik. PILEDRIVER.

(MCCW) - Robert Fuller d. J.J. Funk by using trunks; REPLAY: Eric Embry d. Gary Young in loser-leave-MCCW; Chris Adams wins DQ over Iceman Parsons; Jeff Jarrett d. Buddy Roberts but melee erupts after. SPOT: Skandor Akbar announces he'll retire Embry. DRAW.

(PMTW) - NWA, Muta d. Bob Leet; ACW, Sam Houston d. Bob Leet; WWF, Blue Blazer d. Bob Leet; CMF, Bill Dundee/Hunters draw vs. Wendell Cooley/Danny Davis/Todd Morton; CWA, Lord Humongous wins handicap match vs. 3 men; MCCW, Parsons/Botswana Beast d. Brickhouse Brown/Kerry Von Erich; SCW, Georgia Power d. Eddie Sweat/Lee Scott. MARS WRESTLER OF WEEK - Humongous, but it should have been Bob Leet for the first 3-job week in the history of PMTW. DRAW.

(SCW) - David Sammartino/Chic Donovan d. Steve (Bubblebutt) Bennett/Joel Deaton; Ron Starr d. Louie Louie; Dino Minelli/Steve Lawler d. Steve Reeves/Bobby Bennett; Georgia Power d. Lee Scott/Mr. Atlanta; Tommy Rich d. Stacy Stone. DOUBLE BOMB...really stunk!

(ACW) - Tommy Angel/Ricky Nelson d. Ring Lords; L.A. Stephens d. Brian Johnson; ACW HWT. TOURNEY: Doug Somers d. Don Kernodle; ACW TAG TITLE: M.O.D. Squad Spike/The D.I. d. Todd Champion/Jack Johnson to retain belts; WORLD JR. HWT. TITLE: Nelson Royal vs. Sam Houston still going as show ends. POWERSLAM...excellent action and good graphics and commentary by Bill Connell.

(ALL JAPAN) - From 4/9: Abdullah the Butcher/Joel Deaton d. Terry Gordy/Dustin Rhodes; Jumbo Tsuruta/Yoshiaki Yatsu d. Stan Hansen/Genochiro Tenryu by countout. No rating offered.

(NEW JAPAN) - From 4/15: Takano/Super Strong Machine d. Southern Boys; Antonio Inoki d. Shiro Koshinaka; Big Van Vader/Buzz Sawyer/Brad Rheingans d. Riki Choshu/Kengo Kimura/Tastumi Fujinami. No rating offered.

(PORTLAND) - Because of our late return from Arkansas, we were not able to include this but we'll report on 2 weeks worth of shows next week.

(WEF) - [PRIME TIME]: Primary match: Haku d. Hillbilly Jim. RESTHOLD-PLUS. [SUPERSTARS]: Greg Valentine d. Ronnie Garvin to "retire" Garvin by holding trunks; Demolition d. Rick Mitchell/Jim Chappel; Jim Neidhardt d. Tony Suber; Other winners: Rougeaus, Anabolic Warrior, Dino Bravo. BRO. LOVE: Bushvackers eat Bruce's rose & squeeze sardine juice all over him. DRAW. [CHALLENGE]: Rick Rude d. Hercules Hernandez; Bret Hart d. Scott Casey; Jake Roberts d. Chris Duffy; Other winners: Red Rooster, Rick Martel, Warlord. RESTHOLD.

(CWA/SYND.) - Jerry Lawler d. Keith Eric; Jeff Jarrett/John Paul d. Grappler/Freezer Thompson; Tony Anthony/Action Jackson d. David Elder/Curtis Frazier. DRAW.

(PMF) - Key angle: Dusty Rhodes and Terry Funk get into argument in buildup for HOMECOMING II in Miami and Rhodes and Funk brawl all over the building. DRAW-PLUS.

(CMF) - Wendell Cooley d. Eddie Sweat; Japanese Connection d. Rich Cousins in non-title match when Alan Martin interferes; Ricky & Todd Morton d. The Cobra/Bret Holliday; Danny Davis/Jackie Fulton d. Brad Holliday/Bill Tabb. ANGLES: 1) Mike Davis slaps Jamie Dundee for dropping Japanese flag; 2) Davis & Chono jump Adrian Street, who's out plugging re-release of BRUNT and as they hold him, Bill Dundee surprises and clobbers both Davis & Chono with his boot to avenge Jamie's treatment. DRAW-PLUS.

(AWA) - AWA TITLE: Larry Zbyszko d. Wahoo McDaniel despite Wahoo's foot over rope; Col. DeBeers d. Todd

Becker; The Dazzler d. Miss Kitty; Olympians d. Frank Nelson/Tom Burton. SPOT: Johnny Valiant announces he'll premiere new tag team and take them to top. RESTHOLD.

LINE OF THE WEEK - 1. Paul E. Dangerously, NME: "With the floozie Steamboat married, she'll dump him right after he loses the title." 2. Sting, WCM: "There's no doubt in my mind, you're the best in the world at swinging those Persian clubs---but rasslin's my game!" 3. Brother Love, WEF: "YOU ATE MY ROODOOSE (to Sheepwackers)!" 4. Jim Herd, WCM: "Teddy Long is long gone." 5. Tom Prichard, CMF: "They (Jap Conn) are showing you what you do with a guy (Adrian Street) who wears bows in his hair." 5. Terry Funk, NWA PRO: "The Junkyard Dog is like a jackass---a jackass is both a stubborn and a smart animal." 6. Vince McMahon, WEF, on The Genius: "That's enough to make you head for the nearest Vomitorium." 7. Tony Schiavone, WEF: "Alfred, I can't believe you were crazy for 2 weeks." 8. Joe Pedicino, NWA: "Ricky, we know you love your wife. You love your family. But this time, it's got to be for the money & glory." 9. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "McMahon, Bravo could do with one arm what it's take you 2 or 3 arms to do." 10. Frank Dusek, WCCW: "Tommy Rich---you remember him from MANY years ago on TBS---one of the EARLY stars of wrestling."

11. Mahoo McDaniel, AWA: "Maybe I need some track shoes, Larry, because you can walk backward faster than I can walk forward." 12. Ric Flair, WCM: "Jim Ross, if I were to knock on your door in Dallas with these babes on my arm, you'd say, 'Come on in, the party's startin'!'" 13. Charlie Platt, CMF: "Chono & the RPM are more worried about their flag being dropped on the floor than their victory." 14. Terry Funk, NWA: "At Music City, somebody's gonna be singin' the blues." 15. Greg Valentine, WEF: "I live for wrestling. I live for the World Wrestling Federation." 16. Jim Ross, WCM: "He may be an Iranian champion but he's not too smart." 17. Johnny Valiant, AWA: "Just like the monkey said when he backed into the lawn mower, this tale ain't gonna be long now." 18. Ross, to Sheik, on Sting: "He's a slow learner."

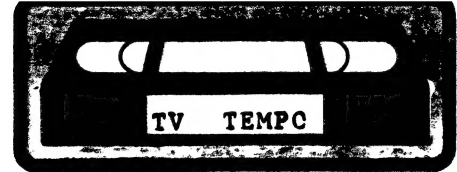
STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Pedicino, NWA: "Ricky, this time, stand up and be a man. Leave the wife and kid at home." 2. Skandor Akbar, WCCW: "I'm going to retire Eric Embry to a nursing home."

BEST PICTURES - 1. WEF, Sheepwackers dumping sardine juice on Bro. Love. 2. PMF, Funk-Rhodes brawl. 3. WCM, Orton-Murdoch melee.

MISSED SHOT AWARD - WCM, for being too late on Sullivan trying to cut Gilbert's hair.

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - WEF, for super of CROUGAR JAY, instead of COUGAR.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Joe Theismann, ESPN/NFL Draft, "Those arms on Tony Mandarich are the biggest I've seen."



since I saw those 16-inch pythons on Hulk Hogan." Joe, even I may have 16-inch arms. 2. Ben Masters, SCM, for never calling his guest color commentator anything but "Tim."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "The John Wayne of 1989, given to Sting by Terry Funk. 2. "World's Smartest Man," given to Lanny Poffo by himself.

BOO AWARD - SCM. We may have to retire this one. But Jerry Blackwell deserves a big one for the consistently awful commentary now on this show.

TUBE TALK

For you tape traders of mine and those who called last week, I was gone several days on business. I will have your tapes and, hopefully, the back issue orders filled this week and next....Terry Funk was tremendous on NWA PRO but the tux was too formal....Kudos for Pedicino's fearless commentary on NWA syndies....WCM just keeps getting better and better and I only hope the ratings bear it out in May....The Sheepwackers/Bro. Love skit was Funny with a capital F. Prichard's facial expressions were priceless.

Don't tell TWA or Northwest Airlines but I watched parts of SPOTLIGHT, CWA, NWA PRO and WCCW from 21,000 feet up with my Watchman....Dick Bourne of Alex City and I will be riding up for WW'89 together Saturday....The thing I liked about the Sheik-Sting angle is it went against the grain of what everyone was expecting....WCM on TBS next Saturday night will be at 9:50 p.m. (EDT) or immediately after the Braves, whichever comes first....Bill Connell's ACW hosting is a refreshing addition. He has to be considered a fine newcomer.

LATE NOTE: A promised plug for Wade Keller's excellent PRO WRESTLING TORCH newsletter. It's \$1.25 per or \$5 for a set of 4. A read you'll truly enjoy. Write to Wade at P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis MN 55420. He's having a drive.

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COMINGS & GOINGS

KING HACKSAW: The WEF crowned a new "king" Thursday night in Omaha and it appears to be a phasing out or declining of Haku. Jim Duggan beat Haku in four minutes and Bobby Heenan left the ex-Islander laying. The faces then came out and had their own "coronation" for Duggan (hopefully, not with that dreadful music or 12 minutes as for Haku). It'll be shown on one of the SUPERSTARS episodes May 13, 20 or 27.

MORE OMAHA: Kendo Nagasaki was in vs. Tim Horner and Jimmy Snuka took on Honky Tonk Man (I'm told both were taped). Tiny Lister was introduced as Zeus, Hogan's next megaopponent, and Tom Magee returned as Megaman, whom I'm told was dreadful.

WEF SWEEPS: Also taped, I'm told, for the May sweeps were Jake Roberts vs. Greg Valentine and a tag match with Tully & Arn vs. Koko B. Ware & Blue Blazer, which I'm told doesn't do much for Owen. One of our sources who talked to Owen at the show quotes Hart directly as saying he "wants to get out of this WWF bad" but no evidence of any movement.

GUTS AWARD: I must give it to Bruce Grummett and his companions for showing up at the WEF card with WRESTLE WAR '89 T-shirts. Pat Patterson, Tony Garea, Rene Goulet and the ring attendants all demanded the shirts removed and WEF shirts attached. Garea even threatened to toss them out but they stayed firm. Finally, they compromised and accepted four WEF T-shirts (they refused the HULKAMANIA variety) but still refused to remove the WW'89 apparel. One WEF insider told the group the "bad blood between us and the NWA is only going to get worse this summer."

HARLEY IN KC: Bob Geigel is planning a return to Memorial Hall in Kansas City June 15 with Harley Race & Dusty Rhodes announced. We'll see if this is like Dusty's AWA "appearance."

NWA ON COAST: The NWA returns for a western swing in early June, hitting Oakland (June 1), Stockton (June 2) and Fresno (June 3). The troops will be debuting in Fresno but they have two TV outlets there and the ratings are reportedly good. Also on the swing will be Reno, Denver and Albuquerque.

PIPER'S PONDERINGS: Roddy Piper has reportedly told friends he'd still seriously consider an offer from the NWA but I'm not convinced one will come. TBS feels exceptionally burned by Piper's agent, Dave Wolff, after having what it felt was a verbal agreement from Piper to come; plus, the WM5 PIT received such bad reviews, Piper's market value is not considered as hot as before April 2. If only folks could see those Portland segs.....

BLACK INK: Jerry Jarrett is said to have done such a phenomenal job of cleaning up the financial mess in World Class, the promotion is actually paying its bills on time and has turned a profit in recent weeks. The payoffs for wrestlers are quite low but Jarrett has accomplished much of the cost-cutting by slashing the Sportatorium staff and only opening the ticket office on the day of a card.

LAST WEEK IN DALLAS: Jerry Lawler defended his Dallas Unified world title vs. Matt Borne last Friday in one which drew little heat. The week before, Eric Embry did a stretcher job in his loser-leave-WCCW match vs. Skandor Akbar (one more inconclusive finish) as Cactus Jack Manson hid under the ring at 5:30 that afternoon and emerged sweating like a greased hog for his 9:30 run-in.

IN THE PAPERS: The Toronto newspapers, both of which have major wrestling columns, recently trashed the WEF and Savage for Randy's being made a star on the heels of "abusing women." One columnist assailed Savage for his treatment of Liz (I'm told it was a legit editorial comment) and I'm further informed some Canadian outlets, in the initial Sherri Martel angle, edited the portion where Randy threw Liz down and clamped her in a wristlock.

SCW IN GRIFFIN: Jerry Blackwell taped last Saturday in Griffin GA, the first such outside the Alpharetta Auction Barn in months. It was a tourney for a new Southern champion. Ron Starr and David Sammartino were the favorites.

JOHN'S FUTURE: John Michaels, the promising youngster who surrendered the Southern belt when he took over as PWTW co-host, is considering his future. If PWTW ceases when Atlanta's TV 69 is taken over by Home Shopping Network, John's not certain if he'll return to the ring or stay in Atlanta, where he has a good primary job and his family is settled.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF?: Something I failed to tell you last week...in that horrible TV match where Mr. Atlanta (Tony Zane) beat Schoolboy Crush, he did so with the Ric Flair leg-on-ropes trick. That dynamic mike duo of Ben Masters & Alan Starr went on forever about the "handful of hair" Zane held and never once acknowledged the leg on ropes. Unbelievable!

TURNER ON COSTAS: Ted Turner appeared on LATER WITH BOB COSTAS last Wednesday and discussed much about the TBS operation but never deviated into the NWA. Then again, Costas never led the questions there. Wonder if Dick Ebersol, who co-produces the WWF/SNME specials, influenced that?

CWF GRUDGE: The Montgomery TV taping Sunday featured a grudge match between Doug Furnas and Terry Gordy, both back from Japan. Gordy teamed with Dustin Rhodes during his Japan stint.

DOWN UNDER: 54-year-old Mario Milano is headlining some independent cards in the Melbourne area and word has it that Fabulous Kangaroo Roy Heffernan is considering retiring from promotion and moving from Sydney, perhaps to Melbourne. MATWATCHer Sue Chuter tells us a number of fans in her locale are hungry for the NWA to get a slot on Australian TV. The WEF matches, just returned to a regular schedule, are around the time of last year's SUMMER SLAM.

BARRY WATCH: We had an early COMINGS & GOINGS deadline because of my trip to Arkansas on business last week but as of midweek, Barry Windham's situation with the NWA was unchanged and at least one unconfirmed report is that Barry is going to work for Dusty Rhodes and may even appear on the PWF HOMECOMING II card Saturday night in Miami. It may happen but I don't yet buy it. One insider told me, "If Barry doesn't work this out with TBS, it's going to be the most financially foolish decision of his career."

RATINGS RAP: CABLE

(Week Ending Apr. 24)	Rtg	Shr	Homes
WMF/PTW (USA 4/24)	3.2	5.2	1.5 mil.
WMF/ALL-AM (USA 4/23)	2.5	7.6	1.17 mil.
NWA/MAIN EV (TBS 4/23)	2.1	4.3	1.04 mil.
NWA/MCW (TBS 4/22)	1.6	3.6	775,000
NWA/NME AM (TBS 4/22)	0.8	7.0	390,000

(ANALYSIS: PRIME TIME had a strong week opposite the network reruns and probably will hold firm during the summer. My guess is MAIN EVENT took a sharp dip from having a weak-rated MCW to plug it. MCW, in its 10:45 slot, did rise to a 2.4 by 11:30. We're told in future weeks when the BRAVES are in prime time, MCW will IMMEDIATELY follow the game.)

PINFALL PROFILE

Ricky, you've done everything asked of you in this series and if it all ends Sunday night, you can respect yourself that you have been part of the glue which has held this promotion together through perhaps its most traumatic time. Time. Maybe that's what it will take for the mainstream to equally appreciate your contribution.

RATINGS RAP: SYNDICATION

(Week Ending Apr. 9)	Rtng	Sta.	Pct. U.S.
WWF	10.3	247	97%
NWA	5.9	144	90%

(ANALYSIS: Not having the NCAA semifinals opposite in many markets and the natural post-WMS curiosity boosted the WWF numbers to a 10-plus. Not much movement in NWA and I don't expect it until the overall lineup improves and this May's shows kick in.)

I REMEMBER... LUCY

No, she wasn't a wrestler--but she took her share of bumps. She didn't carry a 2x4 or wear flowing robes--- but she had a great gimmick: she could make us laugh.

In the archives of television pioneers, Lucille Ball and pro wrestling share a common bond. Both gained their largest followings on Monday nights. And virtually every week since each began, someone has been able to see both a Lucy show or a TV wrestling match somewhere in the world.

A bit of trivia: when DuMont aired its Monday night weekly cards in the fifties, it was forced to move the start time from 9 to 9:30 in early 1952. Why? Virtually every screen in the country was locked on LUCY during the earlier half-hour.

I was talking to my colleague, Dennis Brent, Wednesday night as one of the LUCY retrospectives ended and we remarked how the news of Lucille Ball's death was like someone calling up to say the last surviving pro wrestling promotion was going out of business and our favorite pastime would be no more.

As a child of television, my world has been infused with Lucy, whether she was a Ricardo, a Carmichael, or a Carter, just like it has been with Andy Griffith, Perry Mason, M*A*S*H, Beaver Cleaver, Gordon Solie and Ed Capral. They've all followed me from my adolescence.

But pardon me a brief indulgence in what is predominantly a pro wrestling newsletter. Lucy was just one of those people who wasn't supposed to pass away. Fred Mertz might say she was a bigger tightwad than he: she only gave us 77 1/2 years.

Thank heavens for film, which preserves the human body in freeze-frame. And for all the years of joy you've given us, just as the men of the ring still do for me, here's another sip of Vitametavegamin to you, Lucy!

SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL MATWATCH SUBSCRIBERS

Ladies and gentlemen, for nearly a year we have attempted to provide you with a quality journalistic product at an affordable price. Unfortunately, we have just been informed of a printing and production price increase which will necessitate a hike in subscription rates July 3.

The rates will increase to \$6 for a 7 issue set, instead of the current \$5 for 8. We are also adding a 26-issue rate of \$19. The one-year rate will now be \$36.

Overseas, the charge will be \$10 for 7 issues and \$65 for one year.

Anyone wishing to extend a subscription may do so at the current rates through July 1. We regret the need to do this but we do pledge to work even harder at making MATWATCH an even better publication.

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